


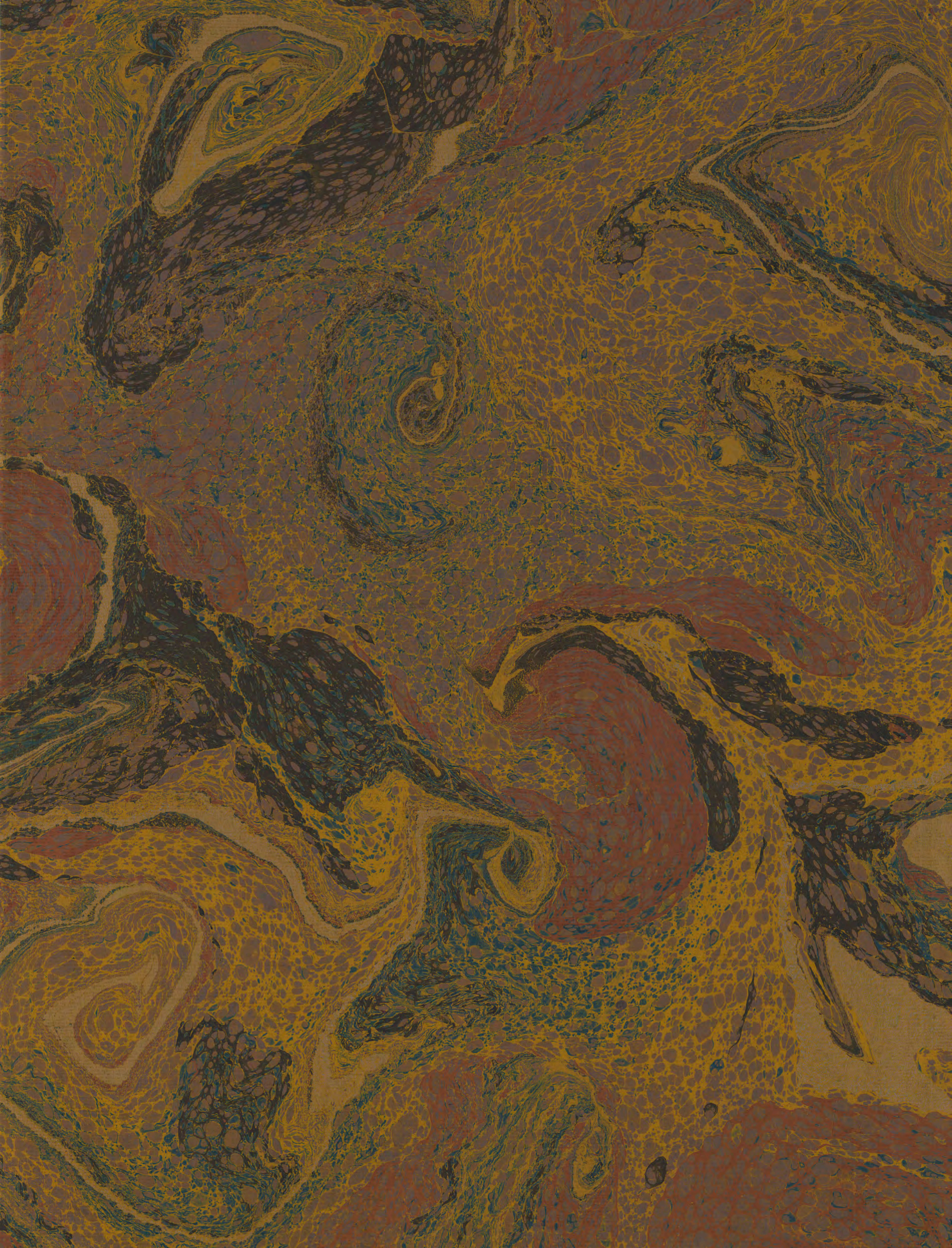
The
BALLOCH CASTLE
Seasons of Lucas



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THE BALLOCH CASTLE SEASONS OF LUCAS 29

SEASONS OF LUCAS

*Being Four Gobelins Tapestries rich with gold, 8 feet 2 inches
high, with combined width of 31 feet 7 inches*

*From Balloch Castle, near Glasgow, where they hung for
nearly two centuries*

*A companion set to the famous Months of Lucas, and by
the same designer*



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SOUR tapestries rich with gold, woven for a private patron at the Gobelins in the first half of the eighteenth century. The average height is 8 feet 2 inches, with combined width of 41 feet 7 inches. Spring (Fishing), 8 feet 3 by 8 feet 8; Summer (Harvest), 8 feet 2 by 8 feet 3; Autumn (Vintage), 8 feet 5 by 12 feet; Winter (Skating), 8 feet by 12 feet 8.

There is an incomplete set, including only the last three of the Seasons, but also rich with gold, in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, lent by Mrs. John T. Morse, Jr., whose father purchased them in France in January of 1852 at the Louis Philippe sale (see article by George Leland Hunter, on Tapestries in American Museums, in the *International Studio* for October, 1913).

There is also an incomplete set including the same three, but without gold, in the collection of Mrs. W. Bayard Cutting of New York. There is a duplicate of Summer, also rich with gold, but with picture extended, in the collection of Lady Beatty at Hanover Lodge.

The Balloch Castle set is the only complete set of the Seasons of Lucas known to be still in existence. Mr. William G. Thomson, author of the great *British History of Tapestry*, wrote in 1915:

"It would be a national loss if the set at Balloch Castle ever had to leave the country."

The designer was the talented Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), whose Months of Lucas were among the most famous creations of the first half of the sixteenth century, and glorified the Emperor Charles V, just as Bernard van Orley in the Hunts of Maximilian (also twelve in number corresponding to and illustrating the months) glorified Maximilian, imperial grandfather of Charles V.

Lucas Huygensz, known to posterity as Lucas van Leyden, son of a Dutch painter, was an infant prodigy. At the age of nine he already executed copper engravings. At twelve he painted the Story of Saint Hubert for Heer van Lockhorst in tempera on linen. Durer, who met him at Antwerp in 1521, speaks of him as a distinguished engraver on copper, and made a portrait of him. In 1527 Lucas went to see the painter Mabuse in Middleburg, and with him visited Ghent, Mechlin and Antwerp, where he entertained the local societies of artists most lavishly. Among his best-known paintings are his self-portrait, at Braunschweig; the Last Judgment, at Leyden; the Annunciation, at Munich; the Healing of the Blind Man of Jericho, at Petrograd; the Virgin with Angels and Donor, at Berlin. It was, however, his numerous engravings on copper, which have been published in heliogravure by Duran of Paris, that made him famous, and give us the best oppor-

tunity to get acquainted with his style. Bartsch lists 174 of them. Many of his paintings were engraved by others, among them: Saint John Preaching in the Wilderness; Emperor Augustus and the Sibyl; Virgil in the Basket; the Crucifixion; portrait of the Emperor Maximilian; David and Goliath; Judith with the Head of Holophernes; Esther and Ahasuerus.

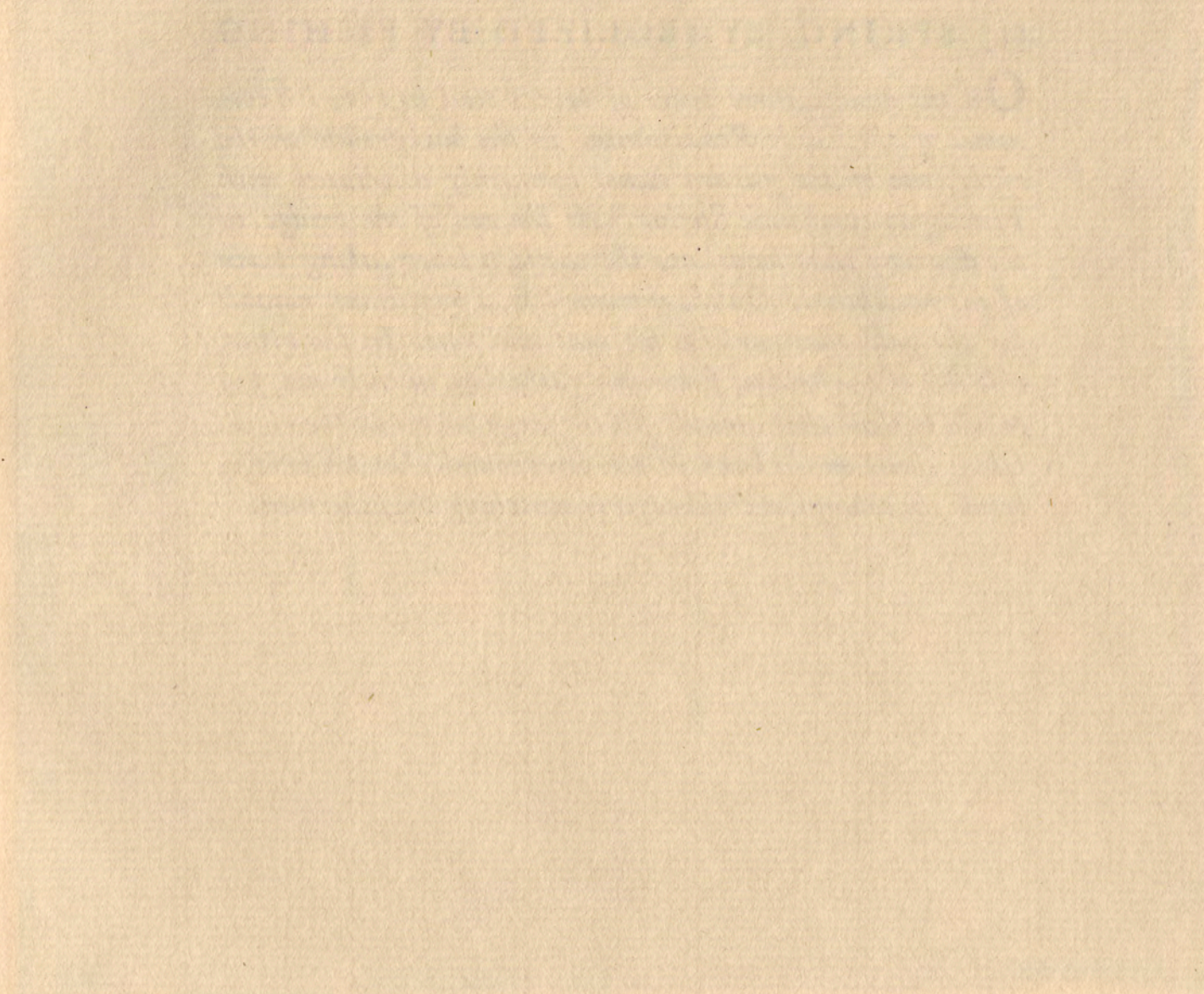
The four Seasons of Lucas correspond in subject and style to four of the Months of Lucas: Spring, to March (Fishing); Summer, to August (Harvest); Autumn, to October (Vintage); Winter, to December (Skating). But though the same models appear as personages, the compositions are different.

Of the Months of Lucas woven at Brussels in the sixteenth century, there are nine of the series of twelve in the Imperial Austrian Collection; and five in the Collection of Mrs. E. H. Harriman of New York; both sets without gold. The ancient set rich with gold presented by the King of Spain to Mazarin, was burned for the precious metal it contained, in 1797, during the French Revolution. But many of the pieces without gold woven at the Gobelins are still treasured as among the most precious tapestries of the French National Collection. Especially well known are those in the Chateau de Pau.

Returning to the Balloch Castle Seasons of Lucas, I would call attention to the richness of the texture that results from the gold and silver worked into the high lights, where it rises definitely but gently against the silk and wool of the ground. Ordinary tapestries have merely the contrast of the natural wool of the faces and hands against the colored silks and wools of the ground; but tapestries enriched with gold have a triple contrast of material to enhance the contrast of ribs with hatchings and of light with dark.

While the shadows of all the Lucas tapestries woven at the Gobelins were deepened to conform to the feeling of painters and weavers of the period, the costumes remain in every detail those of the Early Renaissance, which were worn by the Emperor Charles V and his entourage at the time of his marriage to Isabella of Portugal in 1526. Note particularly the attire of the noble on the right of Autumn, with his slashed hose, puffed sleeves, and full beard.

THE FIRST TAPESTRY: SPRING 29

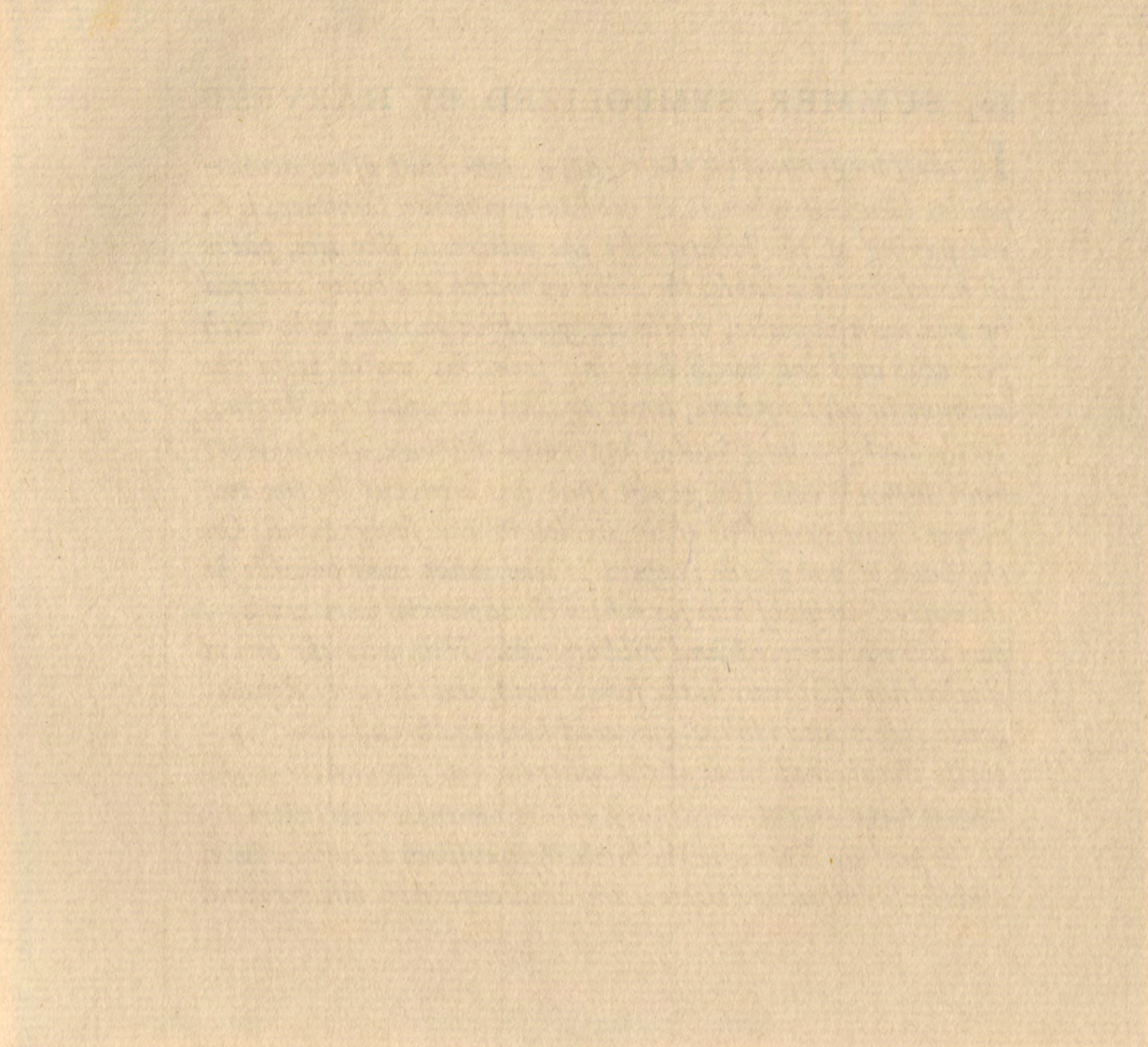


[I] SPRING, SYMBOLIZED BY FISHING

ON the bridge, three pairs of lovers clad in the rich costumes of the Early Renaissance. In the background on the right, one of the garden scenes commonly associated with Fishing to symbolize Spring. At the end of the bridge, in the doorway that leads into the castle, a lover taking leave of his sweetheart. On the extreme left, a gentleman notable for the gold that enriches his coat and hose. In the river, this side of the bridge, fishermen gathering, in their net, fish to add to those that already fill the large bucket on the right. Clam shells on the bank in the foreground. On the bridge, beside the column, a child eagerly watching the fishermen.



THE SECOND TAPESTRY: SUMMER ୨୨



[2] SUMMER, SYMBOLIZED BY HARVEST

*I*N the foreground on the right, a scene that often accompanies Harvest when it is used to symbolize Summer, i. e., the paying of the laborers by the mistress. She sits, purse in hand, beside a table, the coins on which are being counted by the man opposite, while the youthful master, who with pen case and ink bottle hanging from his waist keeps the account in his long book, leans against the apple tree behind. In the background a load of hay crosses a bridge, and laborers bind into sheaves the grain that has been cut by the two reapers who brandish their sickles in the foreground. On the back of one of the reapers is seen what may possibly be the coat-of-arms of him for whom the tapestries were made—two arrows crossed and ribbon-tied. Note also the broad slashed hat that rests in the foreground, and the early Renaissance shirts and ribbon-gartered hose and broad shoes, especially the slashed shoes of the mistress and the master whose sleeves have an extraordinary voluminousness characteristic of the period. Note also the birds that enliven the tree above, and the farmhouse with trees and landscape in the background.



THE THIRD TAPESTRY: AUTUMN 29

[3] AUTUMN, SYMBOLIZED BY VINTAGE

A SCENE easy and delightful to remember. The keynote is given by the six merry children in the foreground. In the background, a vineyard with peasants gathering grapes. In the middleground peasants dancing to music made by the bagpiper who sits upon the gnarled tree stump at the left. On the extreme right, wine being poured into a barrel, while the lord of the manor himself helps a fair peasant to bring a tub of grapes, to add to those that are being crushed beneath the feet of the bearded peasant, and of the gay Lothario with slashed trousers and plumed hat, who is taking the grapes from the bucket brought by the winsome damsel on the extreme left.



THE FOURTH TAPESTRY: WINTER 22

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[4] WINTER, SYMBOLIZED BY SKATING

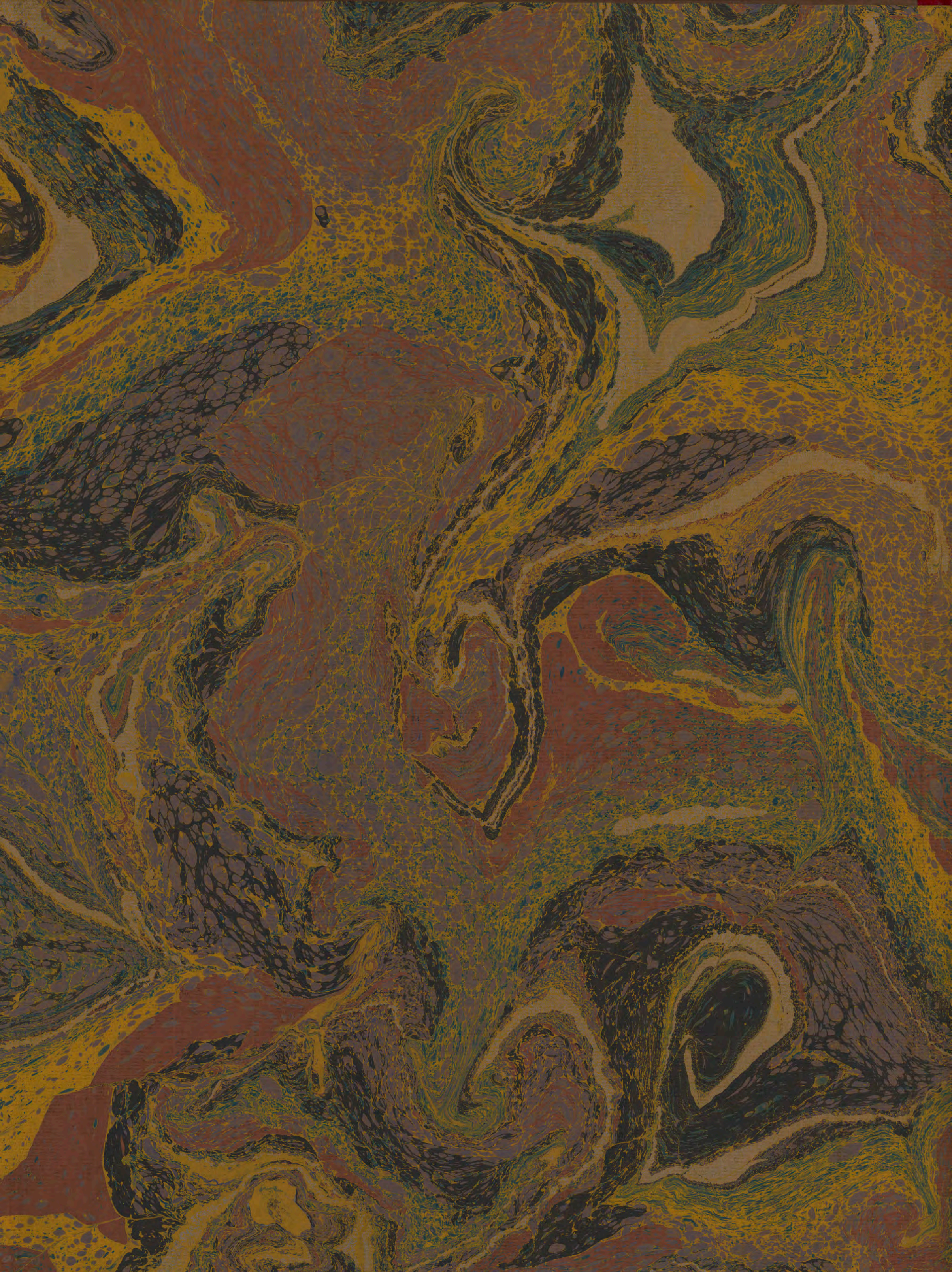
A VIVID picture of winter life in Flanders in the period of the Emperor Charles V, who was born at Ghent and whose native language was French. The lord and lady on the right, though not individualized, resemble closely the portraiture of Charles V and his bride Isabella, which appear in the Months of Lucas. Like many of the most famous ancient tapestries, this has not one scene but two, Skating in the foreground, and a Conflagration in the background on the left. With ladders and hooks the peasants in the upper middle-ground on the left, rush towards the blazing buildings from which horses and sheep are running in terror. To the right, the winter landscape stretches delightfully away in hills and valleys towards the distant horizon. The Skating scene is backgrounded with an imposing castle, before which two children drag a third on a sled, while a fourth runs alongside. Just this side of them a skater runs in the direction of the Conflagration, the news of which is brought by the two men with gesturing left arms on the extreme left. Most of the skaters are apparently still unaware of the fact that there is a fire, especially the youthful lovers in the foreground on the left, and the two children warming themselves at the brazier in the middle foreground. The draping of the costumes is effectively emphasized by the lavish use of gold in the high lights.



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